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*Skela for
grainflock*

FROM HM Ambassador
British Embassy
Dublin

DATE 12 December 1997

CC PS/Secretary of State (B&L)
PS/Paul Murphy (B&L)
PS/Adam Ingram (B&L)
PS/PUS (B&L)
Mr Thomas
Mr Bell
Mr Steele
Mr Stephens
Mr Woods
Mr Brooker
Mr Hill
Mr Maccabe
Mr Fergusson, R1D
Mrs Evans, HOLAB
{ Mr Sanderson, Cabinet Office
Mr Cary, Washington - F

Mr Beeton
Rights and European Division

BLOODY SUNDAY - REVISED STATEMENT

1. As we have commented before, (Richard Clarke's letter to Kate Vineall of 18 November), we doubt that the statement on the lines that proposed in your minute of 10 December to PS/Secretary of State will go down well here in the Republic, (nor, from Anthony Cary's comments, in the US either). I remain concerned that discussion in London has not materially altered the likely areas of difficulty here.

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2. It is by now clear that an apology is not what is being sought. The Irish Government and others have told us on several occasions and with varying degrees of emphasis that they are looking to us to go beyond an apology and to establish the facts. As things stand, the draft statement sends a mixed message, ruling out an enquiry on the grounds of time elapsed (which will be difficult enough to defend here) yet acknowledging that the Irish evidence contained "serious new allegations" requiring thorough investigation.

3. I believe it will be very difficult to explain that apparent contradiction here. I would go so far as to say that, unresolved, it could nullify the point of the exercise. If we need more time to prove the veracity or otherwise of the allegations, we should say so now instead of allowing the undoubted pressure of the forthcoming anniversary to rush us into an unsatisfactory statement.

(Signed)

Veronica Sutherland